

Paul Daniel Barnes, whose professional name is "Polo" Barnes, was born November 22, 1901, in New Orleans, Louisiana. When he was six years old, he started playing a ten cent [tin] fife. This kind of fife was popular in New Orleans. George Lewis, [Emile] Barnes and Sidney Bechet and many others also started on the fife.

In 1919 PB played his first professional job. He bought a sax on August 3, and played his first job on September 3. He had a foundation from playing the fife. As a kid, he played Emile Barnes' clarinet. There were few Boehm system clarinetists then. PB now plays a Boehm. Around 1920 PB started playing a Boehm system clarinet, but he couldn't get the hang of it, so he went back to the sax, which he played until he got with big bands. He took solos on the soprano sax [and later alto sax], but not on the clarinet. He is largely self-taught. He took three or four saxophone lessons from Lorenzo Tio [Jr.]. Tio was always high. PB learned clarinet from Emile Barnes. PB wanted to play like Sidney Bechet, but he couldn't get the tone. PB played tenor sax around New York, baritone sax [and still occasionally alto]. [Today PB is still playing clarinet almost exclusively--RBA, June 7, 1971.]

His first organized band was PB's and Lawrence Marrero's Original Diamond Orchestra. It had Bush Hall, tp, replaced by Red Allen; Cie Frazier [d]; Lawrence [Marrero], [bj?]. PB went with Kid Rena after a little while: "That was the beginning of me playing with a big professional band." Buddy Petit taught Bush [Hall], who helped the band members. BH was the only reader in the band. He helped the others with [reading of?] music. PB helped Red Allen. PB taught himself to read with a method book. The Original Diamond Band played traditional jazz music. They played numbers, popular songs of the day including "The Sheik of Araby", and waltzes. Bands then had to play a waltz to be "considered." PB played both second part and lead. He plays the second

part when the trumpet is playing. He liked Sidney Bechet on sax. He liked clarinetist Edmond Hall after SB left town. He also liked L^aranzo Tio's clarinet. SB played with the Young Olympia Band in New Orleans. Also with this band were Buddy Petit (or Louis Armstrong, who was sometimes sent by BP as a substitute), and John and Simon Marrero.

Talk on the lack of solos then. The trumpet would stop for a few bars or, more rarely, a chorus. If the trumpet player got tired, the clarinet player would take a chorus. Most of the [band members] were playing all the time. The drum[part] was also different. The drummer used what was called "single beat", i.e., 2/4 on the bass drum with licks as used in parades today. The 4/4 beat was used on the last chorus only, by the bassist and drummer with the after-beat cymbal. This would move anyone. It would cause a little baby to move. It was not like Dixieland, which came from traditional New Orleans music. Dixieland was faster and employed showmanship. There would be an occasional slow number "or a blues." Traditional jazz was mostly in moderate fox trot tempo. Now and then the band would play a fast tune, a boogie woogie, or slow number.

PB says that the oldest style drummer today is Alex Bigard, but he doesn't play this style long because his musicians make him play Dixieland.

RBA mentions Dave Bailey, whom PB doesn't remember, although he probably played with Dave Bailey in Chris [Kelly's band], according to RBA. RBA discusses Baliey's style. ^{?-Emile Barnes?} EB was Chris Kelly's regular clarinet. PB would sometimes work with them on as. EB has kept the same style, but was more familiar with the horn when he was young. EB never played sax. [Cf. EB interviews.]

Buddy Petit played a wonderful trumpet. He played in a different style from Kid Rena. (PB played with Buddy Petit.) Buddy Petit liked

to run a lot of different changes on his horn. If you would hear Louis Armstrong's old records, they would sound like Buddy Petit. PB is not referring to LA's high note style. PB first heard "Sand Dunes" with Kid Rena. Buddy Petit also played "Sand Dunes." But it was a feature of Kid Rena's. PB recorded this recently [for Barry Martyn.]. [PB has indigestion.] Kid Rena made an eighth-note scale to pick up this tune. Buddy Petit made a simple pick up.

Louis Armstrong went North around 1920 or 1922. PB heard Armstrong [Hot Five] recordings in New Orleans, e.g., "Savoy Blues", and "Heebie Jeebies." PB heard "Snag It" by King Oliver in New Orleans. Talk on two trumpets on Celestin records.

This started when they recorded "My Josephine" in 1926. They had Papa Celestin and Ricard [Alexis] on "My Josephine." [Cf. discographies.]

Talk on the rise of big bands, about 1926 or 1927. PB had joined King Oliver by this time.

Celestin's sax section consisted of Sidney Carrere, Earl Pierson, and PB. EP played third [alto] sax, SC played [second] tenor, and PB played first [alto] sax. PB used soprano sax, Sidney Carrere also played clarinet.

On first Tuxedo Band [recording] session with Bebe Ridgely. PB thinks Emma Barrett, p [cf. discographies]; PB, sax; possible Adolphe Alexander, but more probably Willard Thoumy, reeds, not Sidney Carrere. [Cf. photo in Al Rose and Edmond Souchon, NEW ORLEANS JAZZ...] PB joined the band just before Willard Thoumy passed [on]. They used stocks, which were then very popular. PB more or less directed the band. They played requests if they knew the number. They bought a stock if a requested number was popular. It was mostly a reading band. Later they played a lot of music from memory. PC played very few numbers

from memory at first. The early PC band would play tunes like "Home Sweet Home," "Lil Liza Jane," and "Whoa Nelly" from memory. On "My Josephine" PC only used a written part (for the lead). "My Josephine" was not published, but PB has the copyright. It was in [the key of] G originally. Almost all tunes which were written in G are now played in F, e.g., "St. Louis Blues" and "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans." This made a heavier sound in the band. After the band learned the G tunes, then they were dropped down to F. It was easier on the trumpet players to make the tune one tone lower.

On pedal notes on the trumpet: Buddy Petit used to play them, as did Louis Armstrong. Very few trumpet players now play low notes. Now every [trumpet player] wants to play high notes. The trumpet and trombone want to play flute parts. Traditional jazz musicians are not interested in making a lot of notes. They want to make the feelings to make you feel. That's why late rock and roll is more like traditional jazz than any other music from that time, either bop or Dixieland [sic]. PB says some rock records you hear now are just like traditional jazz. He scats bass parts. The bass players hit each note. Rock and traditional jazz play 2/4 beat with variations; Dixieland plays 4/4.

PB was with PC ^{elstin} when King Oliver sent for him. KO wrote to him through Manuel Perez's recommendation. MP sent a lot of musicians North. KO heard PB's "My Josephine", and was anxious to get PB. PB wasn't playing when KO left. PB joined the band in St. Louis. Red Allen, Willie Foster and PB joined KO together. Then they went to New York, to the Savoy Ballroom, KO was a "strictly business" fellow, but joked. KO didn't direct the band. Luis Russell directed and did some arranging. Kid Ory was their trombonist; then Pete [?], tb, "tended" to direction. [Cf. W. C. Allen and Brian Rust, KING JOE OLIVER.]

King Oliver's band was paid off by Clarence Black, when PB first joined the band. Clarence Black handled business for King Oliver. Luis Russell was the musical director and arranger.

King Oliver was popular. [There was an introduction of KO's orchestra?], but the individual sidemen were not introduced. Everybody knew KO and didn't get him mixed up with another trumpet player. PB liked playing with both KO and Jelly Roll Morton. They were both nice people. They got more kicks from Jelly Roll, Jelly bragged. If someone asked him if he could play a tune like "Margie," he would say, "Can I play 'Margie'? I'm Jelly Roll Morton. I can play anything!" PB worked with Jelly Roll in 1928, and 1929. The band broke up in 1929. PB stayed in New York City. In 1931 he went on the road with KO, who had come back [i.e., made a comeback?]. They worked for the Frederick Brothers of Wichita, Kansas.

The last time PB saw Jelly Roll was in 1929 after he made a trip with Jelly. At that time Jelly Roll played something like New Orleans pianists of his time. When PB was in his band, Jelly Roll didn't play piano too much; he directed the band. He always had a pianist, probably Benny [last name not given], replaced by [Rod] Rodriguez, and another pianist. Jelly Roll directed with a baton. He talked to the audience and did "a lot of jiving." PB was featured more with Jelly Roll than with KO. When PB joined, Jelly Roll's band was one of the best he ever played with. The band played together [as a coordinated unit] in 1928.

KO's and Jelly Roll's bands were different from Papa Celestin's. The former two were more solid, and the members were better. KO had many arrangements. Jelly Roll used stocks. He had music from Chicago.

There was no sitting in with the bands then. Musicians sat in only rarely in New Orleans, too. Here a musician would do it only if

he were as good or better than you, so it made the musicians nervous. No one asked PB if he could sit in in PB's place. PB was the swiftest alto sax in the city; he could outplay anybody. Other alto saxists came up later. Johnny Handy became a good alto sax player. He was a clarinetist, but he heard PB play alto, and wanted to, too.

When PB joined KO in 1927, KO's band was featuring "Someday Sweetheart." Then bands played the verse and chorus of almost all songs, e.g., "Margie" and "The Sheik...". Modern bands play only the chorus. Kid Thomas and Percy Humphrey like melody. Percy wants PB to play melody. Many clarinetists can't play melody. RBA adds that PB, playing with Kid Thomas at the Moulin Rouge, played "The Holy City;" Buddy Petit and Chris Kelly would insert it in a blues [as PB did when he was with Kid Thomas].

George Bacquet was about the top New Orleans clarinetist when PB was a kid, but PB doesn't remember his playing here. He remembers Lorenzo Tio [Jr.], Sidney Bechet, Charlie McCus^{tr}tis, and Jimmie "Jimbo" Noone, who he says was "one of the next best" to Sidney. When George Bacquet recorded with Jelly Roll, George Bacquet had not played for a long time. At first George Bacquet did not want to record. They recorded in Philadelphia, and then the band went back to their headquarters in Camden. A discussion of Victor [recording company] follows. Sam Morgan's band "was considered behind Rena, Buddy Petit and Chris Kelly." Earl Fouché tried to play like PB and that was a mistake. PB says that a musician would be better off trying to play in his own style. PB was the leading sax in New Orleans, until he joined King Oliver. "Nobody [else] was playing sax." Others tried to play like PB. When PB left King Oliver, Son Johnson was the top alto sax player in New Orleans. Son Johnson and PB played a couple

of nights together in [Herb] Leary's band. Bunk Johnson was in PB's band in Lake Charles including Nellie Lutchter and DeDe Pierce. Bunk Johnson's style did not change much; he was always good.

George Lewis played in "different little bands" around New Orleans in PB's early days. PB liked clarinetists [John] Handy, Albert Nicholas, Jimmie Noone, Sidney Bechet and Big Eye Louis Nelson [DeLisle]. PB thinks that Jimmie Noone played as fast in New Orleans as he did after he went North. He repeats that Noone was, next to Sidney, the best clarinetist. Louis Cottrell worked on tenor sax with PB in PB's band. It had Joe Phillips, tp; Big Head Eddie Johnson, alto sax; PB, alto sax; [others?]. This band did not last. PB had a good understanding with George Lewis, when Lewis played clarinet and PB played alto sax. PB would play the second part on "High Society" and other numbers. PB thinks it was easier to play with Lewis than with "Brother Cornbread" (Joe Thomas). George Lewis made "High Society" more original [means what?]. Alphonse Picou's playing was mainly of ragtime style, not traditional jazz. RBA comments that Picou sounded like he was reading. The difference between traditional music and ragtime is that ragtime must be read. A musician who didn't read was not considered anything much. Sidney Bechet was not considered in New Orleans because he could not read. Bechet was greater on that instrument than anyone else, but he still was not considered because he could not read. Bechet was low-rated by the readers of the older generation. Scott Joplin books [i.e., STANDARD HIGH CLASS RAGS] are mentioned. In traditional jazz you play not what's written, but what you feel in your heart. Ragtime came first, then traditional jazz, then Dixieland, which is more concerned with showing off by jumping around and playing fast.

The first number PB played on his fife was "Blind Pete, He Cannot See At All." PB scats it. It was [based on] the scale. PB could play

anything, including "High Society" on his fife. At the closing of school one year [the Lutheran school?], PB played the fife. He played "Ole Black Joe"[sp?], but the fife could not be tuned to the organ. He impressed the school children, who remembered the event for years. PB was the only student who played. There were no music classes then. PB started playing with Cie [Frazier] in their first band.[See above.] PB taught Cie Frazier how to read before Cie went to [Louis] Cottrell [Sr.]. Cie has forgotten this. Cie was playing drums before PB was playing sax. The two of them alone played parade[s?] with fife and snare drum only. One was for Marigny School students. PB remembers the exact dates of his buying his first sax and his first professional job. [See above.] The job was with George Augustin [bass?], Pete Augustin, banjo, and Eugene Gaspard, drums, who gave up playing.

Unlike Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver had his own arrangements. Noble Sissle at one time used only stocks, PB thinks. On the boat [Sidney? Capitol?] the Streckfuses allowed only stocks to be played, when PB was young. Stocks were not used by most New Orleans bands in taxi dance halls. For every fourth or fifth dance, the band played the entire arrangement which made for a longer dance. Stocks were used in taxi dance halls. Stocks are always modern. It is not necessary to add anything. When played in these halls, the band did not play repeats. At a dance hall they didn't want long numbers, usually two choruses only. Bands in New Orleans did not use stocks generally.

King Oliver's band played largely for dancing. Jelly Roll Morton told the audiences how great he was. Did the people believe him? Sure they believed him. He told about his compositions. He could back up what he was saying as it was actually a fact.

PB first met Jeanette Kimball [when she was living in Pass Christian. Papa Celestin had heard about her. PC, PB and John

Marrero went to Pass Christian to get her. She had never played with a band. From note on tape box, reel 1.]

End of Reel II.

